

September 2009

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the September issue of Eat Right Montana's campaign: *Going Green: Simple Steps for Montana Families*. Our ninth issue for 2009 is focused, like many families' attention, on **back-to-school**. In this month's packet, you'll find easy tips for getting involved in **local farm-to-school efforts, healthy school fundraisers, playing outside with kids, and packing greener lunches for school and work**. For lots of fun back-to-school ideas, check out our September features:

Media Release:

Farm-to-School Successes Grow Strong Across Montana

Healthful Eating:

Smart Ways to Plan Successful (and Healthy) Fundraisers

September Recipe:

Turkey Avocado Wrap

Active Lifestyles:

Key Reasons to Play Outside with Children

Eco-Tips:

Easy Ways to Bag a Waste-Free Lunch

For more on this month's important topics, we recommend:

Farm-to-School	www.farmtoschool.org/
Healthy Fundraising	http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/neschfundrsg.pdf
Benefits of Green Time	http://lhhl.illinois.edu/adhd.htm

We welcome comments and suggestions. Wherever possible, we want to incorporate your ideas and input into our monthly packets. Just send your thoughts to me at EatRightMT2000@gmail.com - and remember, past issues of **Healthy Families** and other ERM materials are available on the ERM web site at www.eatrightmontana.org/.

Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

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Going Green: Simple Steps for Healthy Families 2009



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MT Department of Public Health & Human Services

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Farm-to-School Successes Grow Strong Across Montana

Across the Treasure State, Montanans are enjoying more direct access to food from local farms and ranches. From the Western Montana Growers Cooperative in Arlee to Farm-to-Table projects in Glendive, public officials, entrepreneurs, and volunteers are joining together to create a nutritious, local, and sustainable food system. Farm-to-school programs are an important part of these efforts.

"The good news is that every Montana district can be part of the farm-to-school movement," says Katie Bark, RD (Registered Dietitian) with the Team Nutrition Program, based at MSU in Bozeman. "Serving Montana-grown foods in the cafeteria is just one of the many ways that schools can support local agriculture. Other farm-to-school activities include classroom education and fundraising."

Through the Office of Public Instruction's School Nutrition Programs, Montana Team Nutrition offers numerous resources to help connect children to local sources of their food. The free downloadable materials available at <http://opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/FTS.html>, include:

- A beautiful, new **Mmm Mmm Montana** poster, with local products from all food groups, funded in part by Montana Department of Agriculture, www.montanakids.com/agriculture_and_business/
- A variety of cafeteria and classroom activities, such as **Plan a Healthy Montana-Made Snack**
- Materials to support **Montana Farm-to-School Fundraising** projects

"We'll be adding farm-to-school resources, links, and success stories regularly," promises Bark. "Team Nutrition just awarded six farm-to-school mini-grants, so we'll share those experiences as well. For more about local food in schools and colleges, check out the FoodCorp Program developed by Grow Montana Coalition (www.growmontana.ncat.org/), which uses Americorp Vista volunteers."

According to Bark, there are already many successful farm-to-school projects bearing fruit across Big Sky country. The on-going success stories include:

- **Missoula:** Both University of Montana and Missoula K-12 School District have become national examples of farm-to-school with yearly local purchases of over \$700,000 and \$160,000, respectively.
- **Gallatin Valley:** Two schools and five Montana producers participated in a 2008 pilot fundraising project focused on holiday gift giving, with over \$18,000 in sales and 40% of profits going to schools.
- **Statewide:** Schools from Libby to Fraser are planting 'edible schoolyards,' gardens that teach children math, science, and writing skills while encouraging them to eat more vegetables. Greenfield school buys local beef for lunch menus and Forsyth plans to serve a regular Montana-grown lunch.

"All of these examples started small and gradually grew their farm-to-school programs over time," notes Bark. "Small changes can make a big difference in our local food system."

Past and current issues of Eat Right Montana's monthly packets can be downloaded for free at www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm

5 Smart Ways to Plan Successful (and Healthy) Fundraisers

Many school fundraisers have focused on less-than-healthy food items, such as gigantic candy bars and huge tins of sticky sweet popcorn. Here are five smarter ways to successfully raise funds and promote fit, healthy kids at the same time:

1. Plan an active fun(d)-a-thon.

There are variations on this theme to fit every school or group: Walk-a-thons, swim-a-thons, and bike-a-thons are a few of the more common ones. Pump up the music for even more fun with a dance-a-thon, jump-a-thon, or bowl-a-thon. Participants get pledges for time or distance (as well as strong and fit while preparing for the event).

2. Plan a community sports challenge.

There are dozens of variations here as well. The basic idea is to charge admission to a competition between unlikely groups. For example, high school girls' basketball team versus fire department members or a baseball game between high school boys and the school administration. The goals are fun, fitness, and funds raised from admissions.

3. Plan a farm-raiser.

Farm-raisers are programs that bring healthy foods to families, raise money for school groups, and support local agriculture - all at the same time. Farm-raisers come in many delicious varieties, including sales of individual products and holiday gift baskets. For info on a Made-in-Montana success story, visit www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/FTS.html.

4. Plan a local food or plant sale.

Interest in local food and grow-your-own gardening has never been higher. Producers and greenhouses are often willing to partner with schools on fundraisers to offer value-added foods or plants for home gardens. Plan a winter bake sale with tasty whole grain treats from local bakeries or a springtime plant, seed, and garden advice event.

5. Plan a healthy spirit fundraiser.

Put the FUN into healthy fundraising by combining school spirit with a commitment to wellness. Use your school logo and mascot to share the message that students are fit, healthy, and ready to succeed. Kick off sales of special spirit gear (water bottles, travel mugs, shirts, hats, buttons, etc.) with a family-fun carnival or walk-to-school event.

Turkey Avocado Wrap

Ingredients:

- 1 (9-inch) whole-wheat tortilla wrap
- 1 Tbsp. fruit chutney, such as mango or peach
- 2 oz. roasted turkey breast, sliced
- 4 thin tomato slices
- 2 Tbsp. shredded, low fat cheddar cheese
- 1 tsp. minced cilantro (optional)
- ¼ avocado, sliced into wedges

YIELD: 1 wrap (1 to 2 servings)

Instructions:

- 1) Lay the tortilla on a cutting board and spread with fruit chutney.
- 2) Cover the same area with sliced turkey.
- 3) Lay the tomato over the turkey.
- 4) Sprinkle with the cheese and cilantro (if using).
- 5) Place the avocado wedges across the bottom of the tortilla, 2 inches away from the edge.
- 6) Fold the bottom of the tortilla up and over the avocado, fold the two sides in, and pull at the bottom.
- 7) To keep the filling from pushing forward, keep pulling the rolled part toward you. This also helps make a firm roll.

Substitutions/Additions:

- Use Montana-made whole wheat tortillas, such as Trevino's, and cheese, such as Lifeline Farm Creamery, if available.
- Use cranberry sauce, any tart fruit spread, or salsa in place of chutney.
- For a zestier sandwich, use grated pepper jack cheese or add your favorite mustard.

Nutrition Analysis:

Serving Size: 1 wrap

Calories: 380

Total Fat: 11 g

Calories from Fat: 29%

Saturated Fat: 2.5 g

Trans Fat: 0.0 g

Total Carb: 38 g

Dietary Fiber: 8 g

Sodium: 460 mg

Protein: 32 g

Calcium: 107 mg

Iron: 3.8 mg

Recipe Source

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5 Key Reasons to Play Outside with Children

Everyone from pediatricians and psychologists to teachers and legislators have recently focused on the importance of 'green time' for kids, time for being outside in nature. As it turns out, there are some very important benefits of outdoor activity.

1. Playing outside is fun for everyone.

Before we get into the physical, mental, and academic benefits, let's be honest. Playing outdoors with friends and family is just plain, old-fashioned fun! There isn't anything else like the joy of a good game of hide-n-seek or flashlight tag. There isn't anything like the wind on your face during a bike ride - or the satisfaction of climbing a mountain (or a hill).

2. Playing outside is good for children's bodies.

Physical health is one of the best reasons to play outside. Kids who enjoy outdoor activities (at least an hour a day) tend to be more fit and to maintain healthier weights. They can also make more vitamin D from appropriate sun exposure (15 to 30 minutes without sunscreen). Studies show that most youth currently do not make enough vitamin D for optimal health.

3. Playing outside is good for children's behavior.

Parents and behavior experts agree on this one: Time spent in outdoor green activities, such as sports, walking, or free-play at a park, helps to improve the behavior of children with attention and hyperactivity disorders. In fact, the chance to run, jump, and burn off some excess energy usually improves the indoor behavior of almost any young person.

4. Playing outside is good for children's brains.

Research suggests that the power of outdoor play extends to helping children learn more in academic settings. Outdoor time, especially in green settings like parks and playgrounds, helps concentration and focus in the classroom. Creative outdoor play, such as building a fort or treehouse, also helps kids develop active imaginations and problem-solving skills.

5. Playing outside is good for family connections.

Any outdoor activity - from vigorous games to quiet bird watching - is a good way for multiple generations to spend time making memories together. Playing outside can include goal directed activities (*Let's see if we can make some really big bubbles today.*), as well as simple exploration and discovery (*What kind of bugs are living on these flowers?*).

5 Easy Ways to Bag a Waste-Free Lunch

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the typical brown-bag school lunch would generate 67 pounds of waste per child over a school year. Whether you take a lunch to work or school, here are some easy ways to go greener at every meal.

1. Start with a reusable bag or box.

Forget those boring old brown bags (unless you like them, reuse them many times, and then recycle the paper). The options for lunch bags and boxes now come in cool colors with funky designs for all ages. They are made of a variety of materials; you can find bags from cotton, bamboo, or recycled plastic bags as well as boxes from stainless steel and BPA-free plastic.

2. Add reusable containers.

Once you've got the outside covered, it's time to choose reusable containers for food and drinks. Some of the snazzy new lunch boxes come with smaller eco-friendly boxes, tubs, and bags already nestled inside. Washable margarine tubs and other reusable food packages are a no-cost option. A small insulated beverage bottle is a great investment for hot or cold drinks.

3. Maximize use of leftovers.

Now that we have eco-friendly bags and containers, what about the food? One green way to cut back on kitchen waste is to use leftovers in packed lunches. Entrées can be divided into single servings and put directly into containers for lunch. Meat, fish, or chicken can be sliced for sandwiches, made with leftover salad greens, perfect on an extra whole grain dinner roll.

4. Buy lunch items in bulk.

Single-serve items may seem convenient, but they cost a lot more and make a lot more waste. Save money and the environment by purchasing the largest package you can use. Divide food into your own reusable containers at home. Take a little time on the weekend to make enough small containers of cheese slices, baby carrots, and trail mix for weekday lunches.

5. Keep food safety in the bag.

Food safety should be top-of-mind whenever you pack a lunch. Keep food fresh (hot foods hot and cold foods cold) to prevent foodborne illness. It will also help the environment, since you won't have to throw away spoiled food. Use insulated bottles (for cold drinks and hot soups) along with re-freezing gel packs or small water bottles that can be frozen solid.